

EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

November 12, 2020

This year's annual Christmas Auction will be virtual and will run from Dec 1-10.

The deadline to submit items for bid is Nov 25 (to Shelley or Raquel).

Last week was Jodi Hansen (a familiar face to us) presenting **Remnant Initiatives**.

Jodi has an MA in ministry leadership from George Fox Seminary, a BS in Nursing from Excelsior College, Masters Certificate in Project Management from Villanova, she is a registered nurse, and has volunteered with Dept of Corrections for over ten years and serves as its Chair of the Religious Services Advisory Council.

"When I was a kid cops drove around in obnoxious black and white cars as if telling everybody, "don't do anything bad, 'cause we're right here." Officers were always in pairs, even on TV.



In 1971 Nixon declared drug abuse as public enemy number one and asked congress for \$150 million of which 2/3 would be directed to prevention and treatment with the other third toward law enforcement. Here we saw the beginning of The War on Drugs.

And it really kicked in to high gear under Reagan. "Reagan took office with an agenda. That was to bankrupt the Soviets and end the Cold War. And he succeeded, but at the cost of defunding programs that the poor and mentally ill depended upon. And the public needed a story to latch onto to say, "yeah, we're okay with that.""



So his administration "created a narrative of drug lords and welfare queens. It made for great stories and Hollywood and the news picked up on this. Defunding the programs that poor communities needed to survive caused drug abuse and drug trafficking to soar. People were trying to make ends meet and their children now became dependent upon the belonging and protection offered by neighborhood gangs."

Not picking on Republicans, Clinton too needed to prove he could be tough on crime. And the Media, knowing that the story sold, helped racialize that. Movie bad guys were black or brown.

White folk are getting caught in the crossfire of their gang warfare and someone needs to do something about it. The public demanded that we get tough on crime. When elected officials weren't doing enough we took it upon ourselves with ballot initiatives.

We passed laws establishing harsh mandatory minimums, we began trying youth as adults and discontinued early release for good behavior and those that worked hard at changing while incarcerated.

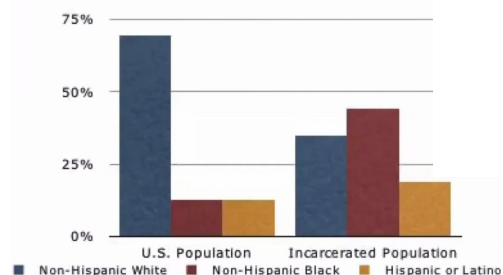
Do the crime, do the time (even if it's a long time), was the mantra.

It is important to note when we look at our criminal justice system that it was Republicans and Democrats, News Media and Movies, and We The People that defined the process of our criminal justice system.

Punishment is what we have come to believe will solve the drug problem.

We have taken cops off the beat, where they knew their neighborhood and vice versa. Then we outfitted them with stealthy, paramilitary vehicles and surveillance technology as if to say, "we're gonna give you the tools to catch people in the act. Not the tools needed to prevent the crime in the first place."

We can see the militarization of police around the country amid the conflicts of this year.



We also see the disparity of race in the people we lock up.

In the '90s local law enforcement agencies suggested that drug abuse was a public health problem, not a law enforcement problem.

Clinton's 1994 Crime Bill incentivized them with money tying federal money to drug arrests and drug convictions. So now, the vast majority of people we're paying to keep behind bars, the ones with the lowest threat to public safety, are there on drug charges.



One in four of us has a criminal record. Oregon incarcerates more people per thousand than the United Kingdom.

After 50 years of defaulting to incarceration we have a ton of research that shows us how this has not worked.

Addressing inequity, mental health and addiction, poverty and lack of opportunity, shame and isolation is more productive. When you have nothing to lose crime makes more sense.

So our current justice system looks like this. 1) Arrest, 2) Adjudicate & Sentence, 3) Incarcerate.

Arrest: Police determine a law has been broken. They file a report, book someone into jail where they may/may not be held (in a non-COVID world), hand off to District Attorney.

Adjudication: The old days of, "oh, no, I don't want to press charges," aren't real. The public doesn't press charges, the DA presses charges. They take the info police have provided them, then decide what crimes they will charge, which may have little to do with the actual crime. With all the non-violent cases in the queue, the DA's team is highly motivated to settle out of court. They often file charges much worse than appropriate then negotiate down to what they wanted to begin with in the form of a plea the accused agrees to out of court.



Today, 90% of convictions are the result of a plea.

So, essentially, we have, a) a crime that happened, b) we file charges much worse, to c) get someone to plea to something much less. This means the whole “process of being tried by a jury of ones peers, that is supposed to be the backbone of justice in this country, is a shame.”

Now “because we have so many people confessing to take that plea deal for a crime they didn’t commit we have this problem today of wrongful conviction.”

We’ve been tracking wrongful convictions since 1989. From the first 350 people exonerated on DNA evidence, their incarcerations were linked to 145 violent crimes after their release. An example of what happens when we put the wrong people behind bars.

So, we’ve gone through the court process, we have a plea deal, now comes sentencing.

Remember, before we go at prosecutors for this, look back on the 1980s and 90s. Voters were the ones demanding harsher minimum sentences.

This took the power away from judges to be able to look at the circumstances of the crime. It’s like you did this, you get that.

Example: Two sex offenders.

The first is a meth-addicted 19 year old who has sex with a 16 year old who is using sex to get the meth she craves.

The other is a 45 year old man who, over time, grooms, coerces, and manipulates his 16 year old niece into providing sexual favors to him.

Those are not the same crime. But the charge is the same on paper, the sentence is the same on paper, and the status of registered sex offender for the rest of his life is the same for both on paper.

Our default for sentencing and punishment is incarceration. But we

have alternative means of dealing with root causes of crime.

It is like we are saying that even if you do not pose an immediate threat to public safety you are not worthy of protection from truly dangerous people. Even if you break a little rule, we will put you away with people that broke the big rules.

That if you break the little rules, you are not worthy of decent pay for your work. “We abolished slavery we said, “oh, slavery is not allowed anywhere in this country, except when somebody is incarcerated.””

“In the case of our criminal justice system we have kind of deluded ourselves into thinking that punishment is actually gonna work.”

Jodi uses this example; No parent believes that the way to change the behavior of a wayward child is to lock them up, away from their family for long periods of time, deny them of dignity and love, to put them in the company of older more sophisticated wayward children who will prey on them. No parent does this. We would call that parents abusers.

Yet we believe that same method will change the behavior of adults.

After we’ve put someone through The System? Those drivers of crime (*poverty, addiction, mental health, and inequity*)? We have only magnified them as seen in our recidivism rates, our opioid crisis and suicide rate.

95% of everyone we lock up is returned to their neighborhood.

The [mission](#) of Remnant Initiative is changing the debilitating fear that keeps the average citizens from helping the released re-enter society effectively

They enact their mission by:

- Remove critical barriers to success: getting a ride home, clothing, a phone, an email address, so they can actively look for a job.
- Build pro-social community over time: lives change when connections change. [You become like those with whom you associate is one of my faves ~jeff]
- Advocate for change in justice system by associating with advocacy groups and policymakers.
- And we educate the public on why successful reentry matters.

A story about Caleb and Andrew, released about the same time in 2018.

Caleb we picked up in Eastern Oregon and

brought him home to McMinnville.

Before we visited his PO we went to the commissary for breakfast to normalize and humanize the transition.

They were laughing over light conversation. He puts his fork down, his demeanor changes, “you know, this is the fourth time I have been released from prison. I was really praying this time would be different. Usually my mom picks me up and our first stop is the bar. And now I’m eating breakfast in an organic hippie cafe with two ladies I just met. Maybe it will be different.”

Two weeks later he had a job washing dishes. He says to Jodi, “I hate washing dishes, I hate the people I work with, I’m afraid I’m gonna haul off and pop somebody.”

“Yeah,” Jodi replies, “that’s not how we operate out here... Let’s talk through some conflict resolution. And we also don’t quit one job without having another.”

So he started applying. In April he landed a job making cabinets. “Did they call you for a reference?”

She said no. “But they called Charlie,” he said.

“Apparently Charlie’s reference was enough that they didn’t need to call me.”

A moment of quiet, “I’m 44 years old and have been stealing cars and doing drugs and spent 17 years behind bars. This is the first time in my life someone has given me a good reference.”

Andrew, in the car with Caleb and the ladies, the mood and banter are light with them going on about Shenanigans in prison. “Thank you guys so much for doing this.”

Since the mood was light, Jodi pops off with “You know why I do this work, right? So you don’t steal MY car.”

He said no, maybe if he was jonesing he would steal from some random lady, but not Jodi. Because he KNOWS her. And there is the spark of community.

We love having a front row seat to transformation.

Measure 110, she is super excited it passed. Oregon is the first to decriminalize possession of small amounts of hard drugs.